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*Extract of a Letter from H.E. the President of the Argentine Republic, Don Bartolomé Mitré, to Mr. Bollaert.*

Buenos Ayres, February 24, 1864.

"It is quite true, as Major Rickard has informed you, that I am occupied on a work relative to the Indians of this portion of America. A commission has been employed for some time in this interesting matter. The moment the work is completed, I shall have great pleasure in sending you a copy. I am much obliged for your kind offers to forward me what I may require on the subject of anthropology, particularly as regards the new school you belong to. I have read with great pleasure the contents of No. 2 you sent me of your Anthropological Society of London, in which I found much curious and interesting information, particularly as regards South America."

Mr. W. W. BOREHAM, F.A.S.L., exhibited a human skull found, with about twenty others, in cutting the Great Eastern Railway between the third and fourth barrows at Bartlow Hills, Essex. In the short communication which accompanied the skulls, Mr. Boreham stated that the skeletons were found, as nearly as he could ascertain, at the foot of the third hill, about two or three feet from the surface, and the situation is such that doubt may be entertained whether the hill was not raised after the bodies had been buried, and partly on the place of their interment.

Thanks were given to Mr. Boreham for his communication.

A paper was then read by W. BOLLAERT, Esq.: "On the Palæography of the New World." [This paper will be inserted in the *Memoirs*.]

THE PRESIDENT said he felt sure the meeting would be happy to return their thanks to Mr. Bollaert for his very elaborate and interesting paper, and he regretted that some portions of it had been necessarily omitted in the reading on account of their length. It was a paper that required to be carefully read and studied, and he thought it would be better to adjourn the discussion of it to a future evening, when they should be able to do it more justice.

Mr. REDDIE observed respecting that part of the paper in which the author regarded language not as a natural gift to man but that it was invented by him, that he could not understand how that could be possible. It was very difficult to arrive at any proof on the subject, but experience affords no instance of the pure invention of even a word of any kind that was not borrowed directly or indirectly, or made up from some existing word. We adopt words and modify them, but we know nothing of the pure invention of a word, and it was difficult to know how a word could originate without some antecedent. He should like Mr. Bollaert to explain logically what he meant.

Mr. BOLLAERT said he had arrived at that opinion in common with most philologists, who believed that the different races of men had invented the languages they spoke. Those who had lived among Indians must have known that they had a very scanty power of language, and that they acquired such words as they have principally from the imitation of natural sounds. Thus the sound of falling

water they imitated, and they gave water that name. That he believed to be the beginning of the formation of all languages. The time when language was originally formed in that manner was a very different question. Another example he adduced was the word used by the Basques to signify the firing of a cannon, "s-tomba," which represented the first noise of the ignition of the priming and then the sound of the explosion. If there should be any further discussion of the subject he should be happy to go into it more fully.

MR. BOUVERIE PUSEY inquired how far Mr. Bollaert considered the Creeks and Cherokee Indians were naturally adapted to receive European civilisation.

MR. BOLLAERT replied that those tribes were not pure Indians.

The following paper was then read :—

*On the Precautions which ought to have been taken to ensure the Health of British Troops, had any been sent to Copenhagen.* By T. BENDYSHE, M.A.

SOME time ago there appeared a possibility that a considerable number of British troops might suddenly have been embarked for Copenhagen. On the propriety of such a step, a member of this Society can have, as such, no opinion whatever. Or, rather, he can only regret that there should be the slightest chance of British life being, under any circumstances, sacrificed in a foreign quarrel. It is not, however, the sword of the enemy which has been generally most fatal to the military expeditions which nations have carried on at a distance from their native land. The differences of latitude, of climate, and of endemic disorders, have too often been utterly neglected by those who order these expeditions; and it is for these reasons that the *Anthropological Society* may fairly discuss the abstract question, of how any large body of Englishmen, placed under strict control in a foreign country, may return least diminished in numbers and strength to their own. "The only memorable disasters imputable to sickness which occurred in the last great war, were those which occurred in the expeditions to San Domingo and Walcheren. And though these were chiefly imputable to soil and climate, circumstances beyond human control, it is to be hoped that they will serve in all time to come, to enforce the necessity of statesmen rendering themselves acquainted with them in calculating the risks of war."\* "We may readily admit that the French expedition to San Domingo at the beginning of this century, the descent of the English at Walcheren in 1809, in the height of the epidemical season, and the Russian campaign in the winter of 1812, might have turned out quite differently from what history shows them to have done, if proper attention had been given to the medical geography of the yellow fever, the marsh fevers, and the effects of congelation."† It is lamentable to think that all the experience which

\* Blane (Sir Gilbert), *Select Dissertations on several subjects of Medical Science*, London, 1822, p. 108.

† Boudin (J. Ch. M.), *Traité de Géographie Médicale*, Paris, 1857, tom. intro., p. xxxvi-vii.